

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

COCO-NUT BEETLES.

Mr. HALE of Tampin sends the following notes about the coco-nut beetles, which seem worth recording :—"The natives here (Tampin) have the following names for this insect in the larval stage—*Lembetah* and *Kelematah*. The latter means that which tickles the eye (sight being understood), and the former is probably derived from it." *Kēlēmata*, originally *Gēlē mata*, may, he thinks, be derived in the following way :—"Malay women are generally slightly hysterical, and seeing a lump of these larvæ wriggling about in a vessel would make a Malay woman squirm (I can find no better word) and would give her a feeling of being tickled which she would so express. The large millipede I have known to cause the same sensation to Malay men who are particularly nervous." This suggestion seems quite a possible one for the derivation. One may compare FORBES'S account of his throwing a woman into a state of *latah*, by flicking a caterpillar upon her, and I have known a syce unable to look at a death's head caterpillar which I was carrying without violent shuddering and horror.

Mr. HALE adds :—"The larvæ are very much relished by Malays, and I myself ate several of them and found them particularly sweet and nice, having a flavour like a fried filbert. The way to cook them is to put them alive into a pan over a slow fire and fry them until they are crisp. In the process of cooking they exude a quantity of a clear sweet nutty-flavoured oil (100 larvæ will yield about half a pint). This is believed by Malay women to be a most excellent hair-oil, and is much used by them for that purpose to encourage the growth of girls' hair. The perfect insect is called *Kumbang Fenti*, *Kumbang Kalapa* and *Buang*, but all of these names are applied indifferently to other large beetles."